

PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR FAILURE OF  
ITALIAN CENTER PARTIES TO WIN  
A MAJORITY IN THE RECENT ITALIAN ELECTIONS

General: Failure of DC Party in past five years  
to overcome the enormous difficulties imposed  
by short sighted opposition from the right  
wing industrialists within its own party and  
the rightist parties, and the deliberate and  
constant obstructionism from the extreme left;  
failure to bring about badly needed social, fiscal,  
and governmental reforms. The PCI was able  
to take credit for much that was done, claiming  
it had forced the concessions from a reluctant  
government.

1. Election Law, or "Swindle Law"

- Brought badly needed cohesion and fighting spirit to rank and file of PCI. ~~Sp~~
- Split PRI and PLI, some of whose leaders refused to go along with the law.
- alienated many otherwise center sympathizers and strong anti-communists, for example, the widely read satirical paper "Candido."
- Provided an authentic basis for attacking the DC party as being undemocratic.

2. Lack of permanent party organizations--(DC, Liberals, Republicans, and Saragat Socialists)  
which can translate the daily life and interests of the average person into political values. This meant the campaign organizations were forced to rely largely on improvisation. Conversely, this is the greatest strength of the PCI as a political force, as well as of the MSI.

3. Rising tide of social discontent in Italy as elsewhere in the world.

Although politically Italy responds well to democratic processes--almost 94% of the electorate voted in June--socially it still retains many of the influences and usages of feudalism.

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Industrialized north has been in social ferment since the turn of the century.

Feudal south, where wealthy landowners have in past practically "owned" the political support of their down trodden farm workers (for Monarchist party) was for the first time strongly breached by the left. The center parties all lost ground in this area.

4. Russian "peace offensive" and Churchill speech.  
"Peace offensive" made possible PCI adoption of sheep's clothing.  
Churchill advocacy of rapprochement with Russia gave extremists effective ammunition against De Gasperi's Atlantic Pact, EDC, NATO, pro-U.S. policies.
5. Rivalries in some areas between local center candidates - primary and general election held together - resulting in splitting of center vote and victory of opposition candidates.
6. Failure of government to cope with unemployment, particularly in providing jobs for youth.
7. Failure arrive at satisfactory solution Trieste question--attendant concern over U.S. support to Yugoslavia.
8. Basic anti-clericalism of large percentage, probably well over 50%, of electorate, and weakness of non-clerical center parties.  
Swindle law seemed, and was, calculated to perpetuate DC control over center minors, driving many voters to extreme parties to express anti-clericalism.

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10. Uncertainty over strength of isolationist sentiment in U.S., and consequent mistrust of validity of American world leadership. Contributing to this uncertainty:
  - Deep cuts portended in foreign aid and defense spending, with talk of more to come.
  - Indiscriminate investigation of overseas activities.
  - Restrictive U.S. immigration and entry policies.
  - Extremist parties berated De Gasperi govt for its subservience to U.S.